

# **MINUTES**

## **SELECTMEN'S/ASSESSORS' MEETING**

**Tuesday, February 5, 2019**

**William Pullen Building Meeting Room**

**6:30 p.m.**

**Selectmen Present:** Greg Grotton, Lyle Cramer, Jim Justice, Sarah Drickey.

**Others Present:** Jay Feyler, Jesse Thompson, James E. Freyenhagen, Erik Amundsen, Bruce Cobb, John Gibbons, Dan Day, Lawrence Nash.

- 1. Call Selectmen's Meeting to order:** 6:30 p.m.
- 2. Pledge of Allegiance**
- 3. Public Comment:**

Erik Amundsen mentioned two bills currently in the legislature: LR -260/LR-980. The bills are requesting a 55% contribution from the state to the school system. Another bill, LR-530, is associated with wages and benefits in which the state will help compensate benefits for teachers and help alleviate property taxes. Erik also mentioned that low income residents should be applying for free/reduced lunches. The school system will not receive state funding if residents do not sign up for the lunch program, which affects the bottom line. He also suggested that the Selectmen from Union, and surrounding towns, take a tour of the local schools; witness the conditions, be able to ask questions, and to get a better understanding of why things are the way they are. Another suggestion made was to have the town manager's agenda posted before each meeting, so that the general public knows ahead of time what is going to be discussed.

Discussion: Jim Justice would like the School Board to keep in mind, the funds assigned to the municipal should come back to the municipal instead of the school system. Jay suggested one of those bills that the Legislative Policy Committee supports, in which additional funds are allotted, come back to the municipality. He added the one that goes back to the school was not supported by the town for various reasons and should be used to reduce educational tax commitment. Jay considered it a great compromise as it helps fund education and is used for real tax payer relief. Greg thanked Erik for attending on behalf of the School Board. He suggested announcing the lunch program in the town newsletter as well as at the annual informational meeting; a good way to get the word out to the public. He also suggested having a representative present to answer questions at the annual informational meeting.

Jim Freyenhagen asked permission to tap town property maple trees.

Motion by Lyle Cramer to grant permission to Jim Freyenhagen to tap trees outside of the cemeteries, not inside.

2<sup>nd</sup> by Jim Justice

4-0

**4. Approve minutes of Tuesday, January 15, 2019:**

Motion by: Lyle Cramer

2<sup>nd</sup> by: Sarah Drickey

Motion amended by Lyle Cramer to make spelling correction.

2<sup>nd</sup> by: Sarah Drickey

4-0

**5. Sign Treasurer's Warrant dated Tuesday, February 5, 2019:**

Motion by: Jim Justice

2<sup>nd</sup> by: Lyle Cramer

4-0

**6. Discussion and approval of the Ambulance Budget/with Budget Committee:**

Jay explained because of Washington's March town meeting, the ambulance budget needs to be approved now. Union, Washington and Appleton all voted to increase the budget significantly. The increase is by a margin of 40% which is 14.86% in the overall ambulance budget. The net to be raised is up about 40%. The factors pertain to reimbursements, as the affordable health care act was bound to catch up and the reimbursement rates are extremely high. The current charge is \$800.00 for a paramedic to come from NE. Money is being lost on calls. There is a struggle to get paramedics and ambulance personnel. The overall numbers are right in the ballpark of what a private company is charging. The change in taxpayer dollars is from \$40,000 to \$56,000, an increase of \$16,000. The Board of Selectmen will officially vote this evening, and the Budget Committee will vote in April.

Discussion: Jesse was asked about the reimbursement vs. expense. He stated that Maine Care pays 65% of what Medicare pays. Medicare pays 85% of what a private insurance company would pay. These programs are hurting the bottom line. A basic ambulance hospital run costs approximately \$400-\$500 at \$14.00 per loaded mile. Some private insurance may reimburse for non-transport, but Medicare does not reimburse for non-transport. Jim asked about the billing process for auto accidents. Jesse explained that medical insurance is billed first, then auto insurance, but there have been new changes for this process which he needs to clarify. Greg asked about non-reimbursed supplies; will

insurance companies reimburse supplies? Jesse stated he can now bill for supplies and has been doing so. Jay stated that the budget committee will have call volume numbers in their budget packets.

Motion by: Jim Justice to approve the entire budget for \$306,400.01.

2<sup>nd</sup> by: Sarah Drickey

4-0

**7. Set new date for Informational Meeting:**

The Informational Meeting will be April 30, 2019 @ 6:30 p.m.

**8. Discussion of Draft Audit:**

The Board has received a draft of the audit and is in the process of reviewing. The fund balance will need to be updated during final budget and commitment.

**9. Discussion on mowing services for ensuing year:**

Jay stated that contracted mowing services, especially in our cemeteries, has become an issue. The damaged headstones are still pending with the insurance company. Hopefully there will be enough compensation from the insurance company to purchase mowing equipment needed for in-house. He said it would be in our best interest to keep our Public Works winter part-time employee for the summer and possibly utilize inmates; this would still enable us to complete the roadside work that needs to get done. The current contract should be terminated with Stevens as they did not fulfill their obligations.

Discussion: Sarah is concerned about having properly skilled people to do the job. Jay stated he can diligently oversee the work being done. Greg asked if the year-round employee will become eligible for benefits? Jay explained that he will become eligible, but not for at least two more years; he is currently under his parent's insurance. It will also give the town time to evaluate the progress. Greg asked about leaf removal equipment. Jay explained that is rentable equipment that can be easily rented by one or two of the tractor dealers in town.

Motion by: Jim Justice to allow Jay to terminate the contract with Stevens (30-day notice) and move the mowing services in-house.

2<sup>nd</sup> by: Sarah Drickey

4-0

#### **10. Town Manager's Report:**

The Legislative Policy Committee is getting busy. There are over 2000 bills that have been presented, but not many that will affect municipalities. He is hoping revenue sharing does not come out, as there will be financial disadvantages to the town.

LED street lights: Union is looking at a 4-year payback on lights. Details, as well as figures, will be out shortly for the Board to vote on.

Discussion: Greg asked if the town is responsible for the fairgrounds. Jay stated that the fairgrounds is a separate entity, but they are included in the RFP.

Jay stated within a few weeks, the Board will have some rough RFP's to look at regarding solar panels.

#### **11. Other Business:**

Sarah stated that Founders Day planning is underway. She asked what the \$1200.00 budget covers. Jay confirmed for a band and bouncy houses.

Greg suggested asking Laurie at the Community Center to lend out the portable food cart to the town for Founders Day. The proceeds could go toward the ambulance and fire department. Sarah will ask the TCC about borrowing the cart.

#### **12. Selectmen's Report:**

Sarah asked about publicizing the position for a new Selectman. Jay has already started to spread the word via social media, etc.

#### **13. Future Agenda Items:**

Spirit of America Award for April.

#### **14. Adjourn:**

Motion by: Jim Justice

2<sup>nd</sup> by: Sarah Drickey

4-0

Meeting adjourned at: 7:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandy Patrick  
Secretary